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ENGLISH COMPOSITION--A COLLEGE PROBLEM, A STUDY OF THE COLLEGE PREPARATION OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH.

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CALIFORNIA PROGRAMS TO TRAIN PROSPECTIVE SECONDARY TEACHERS OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION WERE STUDIED THROUGH AN EXAMINATION OF COURSE OFFERINGS IN COLLEGE CATALOGS AND INTERVIEWS WITH COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY MEMBERS. PURPOSES OF THE SURVEY WERE TO DESCRIBE CURRENT PRACTICES IN PREPARING COMPOSITION TEACHERS, TO IDENTIFY APPARENTLY EFFECTIVE TRAINING PRACTICES, AND TO COLLECT COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS' OPINIONS ABOUT THE IDEAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS. AN ENGLISH MAJOR'S COURSE WORK WAS DISCOVERED TO LIE 85-95 PERCENT IN LITERATURE AND ONLY 2-10 PERCENT IN WRITING. MOST PROGRAMS REQUIRED A YEAR'S WORK IN A FRESHMAN ENGLISH COURSE CONSISTING OF LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION AND STRESSING EXPOSITORY WRITING. FEW COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS WHO HAD SPECIAL PREPARATION FOR TEACHING WRITING COURSES OF ANY KIND WERE FOUND. MOST COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS SUPPORTED EARLY AND CLOSE CONTACTS WITH HIGH SCHOOL COMPOSITION PROGRAMS, AND WHERE COLLEGE ENGLISH DEPARTMENTS PARTICIPATED IN TEACHER PREPARATION AND EMPLOYED SPECIALISTS TO TEACH ACADEMIC AND METHODS COURSES, PROGRAMS WERE MORE SUCCESSFUL. THE CONCLUSION IS THAT COURSES IN FRESHMAN ENGLISH, ADVANCED COMPOSITION, AND METHODS IN TEACHING ENGLISH, WHEN ADEQUATELY PRESENTED AND SUPERVISED, PROVIDE SUFFICIENT PREPARATION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION. (RD)

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Western College Association

ENGLISH COMPOSITION

A College Problem

*A study of the college preparation
of prospective teachers
of secondary school English.*

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by
Hazel J. Jones
and
N. Field Winn

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English Composition: A College Problem

*A study of the college preparation of
prospective teachers of secondary school English*

by

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I. Introduction

NO ASPECT of the humanities has been more subject to conflicting theories, critical subtleties, and commercial exploitation than the modes of communicating thought and feeling. In recent years the effort to quantify and to establish precise symbols of meaning has extended beyond mathematics and the physical sciences, and is said to form a separate world of understanding. At the same time, the popular media such as television and advertising have developed visual and auditory stimuli which carry the message while they only massage the mind. The difference between written English and spoken English has been carefully studied; the difference between teaching English to those who have always used it and teaching English as a foreign language has been analyzed. The psychology and the sociology of language have been explored.

Yet written prose has remained the basic means for the expression of thought and the communication of knowledge in the academic world. Prose conveys its meaning by a recognized vocabulary, within the logic of grammar, and with the art of style. To read with understanding, and to write with sufficient clarity so that others may read with understanding, are accepted prerequisites for higher education. To provide training beyond mere literacy has been the historic function of "grammar" schools, and to develop correct writing and even teach some grace are major purposes of secondary schools. These are truisms. Everyone knows them, just as everyone knows the penalties of being "culturally disadvantaged." Tremendous sums are spent on education to open the doors of academic opportunity to every student up to the level of his abilities.

Yet colleges and universities still find that they must require freshman English, and often provide remedial training so that otherwise well-qualified students can go on to truly collegiate programs. This has long been a concern of presidents and deans of the member institutions of the Western College Association. It is a situation known to English and education departments. In the academic world, everyone acknowledges the problem — but no-one accepts responsibility for its existence.

This is the background for the present study in the college preparation of prospective teachers of secondary school English. Early in 1965, Dean Hector H. Lee of the new Sonoma State College pointed out to the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges that most colleges and universities did what they did about the training of teachers of English composition in an atmosphere of generalized concern but without

much definite knowledge of what was needed and what was being done elsewhere to meet similar needs. The Commission approved Dean Lee's proposal of a survey of training programs in California and referred the matter to the Executive Committee of the Western College Association. On March 11, 1965, the Executive Committee authorized Dean Lee and the Executive Secretary, Dr. Mitchell Briggs, to develop the plan at a cost of not more than \$4,000 for travel, secretarial expenses, and the printing of the report, and to make application to the Rosenberg Foundation. Half this sum was made available from the reserve fund of the Association, and the Rosenberg Foundation made a grant of \$2,000, completing the initial stage of the project.

A delay of a year followed, however, when Dean Lee found that his administrative duties at Sonoma State College prevented him from making the survey himself. With the approval of the Rosenberg Foundation, the Western College Association divided responsibility for the project and transferred it to Dr. Hazel J. Jones of California State College at Fullerton and Dr. N. Field Winn of Chico State College. They made the survey during the 1966-1967 academic year, and completed the draft report in June. It should be stressed that this report deals only with what California colleges and universities are or are not doing now; it is made for them and is concerned for the future. The report is not a survey of secondary school teachers of English in California, and is not concerned with where and when the present body of teachers received their training.

The Western College Association is indebted to Dr. Jones and Dr. Winn for the time and thought which they gave to the preparation of this report, and to the Rosenberg Foundation for making it possible. The Association wishes to thank the institutions which were visited for their cooperation, and especially the faculty members listed in Appendix A.

FRANCIS H. HERRICK
Executive Secretary
Western College Association

II. Background and Procedures

Speaking in 1868, Thomas Henry Huxley complained that children in English primary schools were unable "to write the commonest letter properly." Viewing the higher schools, he remarked: "It is a rare thing to find a boy who can read aloud decently, or put his thoughts on paper in clear and grammatical (to say nothing of good or elegant) language." Huxley was concerned with instruction in English schools, but had he been a twentieth century American speaking today, his words would be almost equally valid. We can gain some comfort in the knowledge that pupil competence in composition has been a perennial problem, that it has been a cause of deep concern, and that it has not been confined to modern American schools. We should find little comfort, however, in the fact that after at least a hundred years of effort on both sides of the Atlantic, an adequate solution has yet to be found.

In recent years, particularly in America, investigations of student writing have been legion. Studies have been made of the relationship of many variables to improvement in writing. Among recent studies which seem promising for the teaching of writing are the research of Francis Christensen at the University of Southern California, and Kellogg Hunt at Florida State University. Christensen, examining the work of professional writers, has evolved a series of principles of generative rhetoric which make possible an analysis of modification patterns. He has just published a preliminary account in a small volume, *Notes Toward a New Rhetoric*, (Harper & Row, 1967). Kellogg Hunt, comparing pupil writing at various grade levels with that of practicing authors, has developed a "subordinate clause index" as a means of examining language maturity and writing. ("Recent Measures in Language Development," a talk delivered to the National Conference on Research in English, AERA Annual Meetings, Chicago, Illinois, February 19, 1966; and *Grammatical Structures Written at Three Levels*, Florida State University, 1964.)

Other investigators have attempted to evaluate composition at both the high school and the college level, and have developed essay scales offering subjective guidance to teachers of English. One such investigation, *A Scale for Evaluation of High School Student Essays*, is mentioned here because it was concerned exclusively with the writing of seniors in California secondary schools. Prepared under the chairmanship of N. Field Winn and published in 1960 by the National Council of Teachers of English, this study established the fact that 66% of the essays examined would have failed to qualify students for placement in a standard college course in freshman composition.

It is clear that students in American high schools generally write more competently today than they did seven years ago. It is equally clear that they still do not write with the accuracy and effectiveness

which should be desired. They are products of crowded classrooms and heavy teaching loads. They frequently are taught by instructors whose training and interests are almost entirely in literature, or whose training and interests are in history, physical education, or some other discipline. Such teachers dislike the "drudgery" in composition classes, and some of them do not feel entirely comfortable in their efforts to teach the principles of effective writing. A public school administrator attached to one of the largest districts in California recently said that most of the teachers he engaged preferred to teach literature. Those who drew assignments in composition, he noted, often had to be taught how to conduct their classes.

One consequence of this situation is that the secondary school student usually does not have enough experience in composition. Even if he writes well, he seems to have developed his abilities not so much through instruction as through innate sensitivity to language and a kind of intellectual osmosis. Frequently he does not understand how or why he writes as he does. Let almost any competent teacher of English read two essays before a class of high school seniors or college freshmen. Let him ask which essay is more effective. He will find no unanimity of opinion. Let him state that one essay is much better than the other and ask why. The question is likely to result in a few vague and tentative generalizations followed by an awkward silence.

Different levels of education have traditionally blamed each other for student deficiencies in composition. The secondary schools have blamed the elementary schools, and the colleges have blamed the secondary schools. Such recriminations have had a salutary effect. They have simply confused and augmented the problem. Few college instructors have recognized the fact that the teaching of composition is — or should be — a continuum in which the colleges and universities have as much responsibility as do the elementary and secondary schools. Few have faced the unpleasant reality that under the stress of increasing population and inadequate financing many of the problems encountered by teachers of English in public schools seem to have no ready solution. Fewer still appear to be fully committed to the proposition that the teacher who is trained to teach composition, who believes in writing as a legitimate discipline, and who is willing to undertake an arduous and often thankless task, is the vital part of any writing program at any educational level. If college instructors complain about entering students who are incompetent when they attempt to put words on paper, the instructors should remember that the teachers of the students came from the colleges.

The foregoing paragraphs are a subjective judgment about the status of composition and the teaching of composition in the secondary schools of California. They are not an attempt to find a scapegoat; they should not be construed as professional finger-pointing. Nor is the report which follows intended to be prescriptive. It is a factual account. First, it attempts to describe current practices in the preparation of

college students who eventually will be teaching composition in the secondary schools. Second, it identifies some apparently effective practices. Third, it offers a compilation of instructors' opinions about the ideal program for the preparation of teachers of composition. Finally, it presents several recommendations.

Such a report could have been simply a compilation of responses to questionnaires sent to colleges and universities accredited for the preparation of secondary school teachers of English. But the use of questionnaires presents at least two difficulties: it seldom achieves full coverage, and the results are not always reliable. The investigators charged with preparing this report decided, therefore, to make a thorough study of college and university catalogues in order to determine official course offerings and requirements for prospective teachers of composition, and, with this information in mind, to conduct a series of interviews in college and university departments of English and Education. This procedure resulted in visits to 47 campuses and interviews with more than 100 administrative officers and faculty members. The institutions visited and persons interviewed are listed in Appendix A.

Although the interviews were necessarily informal, the investigators consistently sought answers to the following questions:

1. What pattern of courses is required of majors in English?
2. What courses in composition and allied fields are offered by the Department of English?
3. What courses in composition and allied fields are required or recommended for students preparing to teach composition in the secondary schools?
4. Do instructors who teach college composition have special preparation in this discipline?
5. If teaching assistants are employed to teach composition, what is the nature of the assistantship program?
6. What subject matter is covered and what procedures are employed in the English methods courses?
7. Under ideal circumstances, what kind of program would offer the most effective preparation for prospective teachers of secondary school composition?

A careful study of catalogues, together with initial interviews, immediately established the fact that some unforeseen limitations were inherent in the procedures adopted. For example, although the 1966-1967 catalogues offered general descriptions of courses and programs, they did not reflect actual or anticipated changes in curriculum; and they could not be expected to present detailed descriptions of course content and teaching practices. The interviews likewise resulted in some problems. Obviously the accuracy of information obtained on college campuses depended upon the accuracy of the statements made by persons interviewed. Some instructors, unfortunately, seemed not to be well acquainted with the program and procedures of their departments. A few instructors appeared to report what they thought the interviewers wanted to hear.

The term "expository writing" was a problem. Frequently it was used to mean only the critical analysis of literature, and not the descriptions, logical arguments, or presentations of scientific data which are included in the responsibilities of a secondary school teacher of English. Occasionally it was difficult to separate personal opinion from actual practice. Despite limitations of this kind, however, the data gathered seemed to bring to focus a generally accurate picture of the preparation commonly received by prospective teachers of composition. Moreover, it was clear that the data could be classified to permit analyses, comparisons, summaries, conclusions, and recommendations.

III. The Major in English

SINCE a study of the teaching of composition is likely to be significant only when placed within the context of the major in English, it seemed advisable to examine requirements for the major. This examination revealed the fact that about 75% of the colleges and universities visited offered a single academic major in English. The remaining institutions were about equally divided in offering either dual majors (academic and teaching) or majors composed of a basic core of studies augmented by courses selected from two or more options. Nearly all major programs were designated in terms of courses and required units of credit, although in one instance the student was allowed to select ten courses in a pattern of his own choice and to prepare himself for a senior examination in six areas of language and literature. In general, throughout the state, students completing the major were expected to do 85-95% of their work in literature, 2-10% in writing, 2-5% in literary analysis, and 2-5% in language.

In many institutions, the major in English is designed to prepare students for graduate study and perhaps teaching at the college level. While this is appropriate for some students, the same pattern prevails in colleges where few graduates enter college teaching and where those who become secondary school teachers are much more numerous.

IV. Preparation for the Teaching of Secondary School Composition

Freshman English

ALTHOUGH freshman composition is not the primary subject of this report, instruction of freshmen in reading and writing seems basic to all advanced study in departments of English. A sampling of

freshman English programs is therefore included. They are listed in Appendix B.

In the majority of the 33 programs surveyed, students were required to enroll for two semesters or three quarters of course work, though in several colleges a single term of ten to eleven weeks was required, and in one instance all except science majors were expected to complete a two-year course. It appeared that nearly all students had some experience in English during their freshman year, except those who were excused on the basis of scores on entrance examinations. Some colleges grouped students according to ability; several colleges offered freshman honors sections.

Most of the programs, regardless of duration or method of grouping students, were conventional combinations of literature and composition in which expository writing was usually emphasized. Within this pattern were some significant variations. For example, one university has developed an experimental program in which professional writers work with students on problems actually faced by practicing authors. Two Catholic institutions offer rather unusual freshman courses. One of these colleges, employing an interdepartmental staff, emphasizes reading in the classics and bases all writing upon the student's knowledge of world literature. The other requires a two-year course in rhetoric and literature. During the first year many papers on a variety of subjects are assigned; during the second, emphasis on literary analysis appears to demand fewer essays. Finally, one private college has adopted a semantics approach concerned with problem solving and literary analysis.

Teachers of freshman English were found to vary considerably in background and experience. In a few institutions all freshman courses were conducted by regular members of the staff, including senior professors, since departmental policy did not allow the use of graduate students in teaching assignments. In most of the larger colleges and universities, however, approximately half of the teaching staff was composed of assistants, and in one state college all freshman courses in English were taught by assistants or part-time instructors.

Nearly always when assistants were employed, they were supervised through a planned program directed by a coordinator of freshman English. The amount of supervision varied. In a very few cases the assistants received no supervision whatsoever. Usually they met in training sessions, sometimes only with each other, sometimes under the direction of a supervisor who led discussions on problems of teaching and the evaluation of student essays. In at least two institutions assistants were required to enroll in a seminar concerned with the teaching of college composition; in another college, in which both upper division and graduate students were employed as tutors, students could earn credit toward the major. In this instance, tutors attended weekly meetings, worked with regular staff, led student discussions, and evaluated freshman papers.

Throughout the state the assistantship program in English appears to be expanding rapidly. Undoubtedly it has offered — and will continue

to offer — valuable training and experience for the teaching assistant. Its effect upon the freshman student, however, requires further examination.

Programs which did not utilize teaching assistants offered almost no formal supervision. Some freshman coordinators expressed dissatisfaction with this situation because instructors, free to use any procedures and materials they wished, taught many different kinds of courses. Other coordinators felt that it would be difficult, perhaps undesirable, to supervise the work of their colleagues. A few instructors involved in directing freshman composition were seeking increased uniformity and continuity in their programs.

In freshman English courses it was common to find some instructors requiring only two or three written assignments a semester and others requiring two or three papers a week. It was equally common to find great variety in the content of the courses examined. Although most of the courses emphasized exposition or a combination of exposition, description, and narration, some devoted much time to structure, diction, and mechanics; a few attempted to develop literary style.

Few other courses have been subject to so much experimentation as freshman English, and additional changes are to be expected. In the fall of 1967, one private college will establish a committee on composition with power to excuse some students from freshman English and advise or require others to enroll for the course. Another college, eliminating its freshman requirement in English, will permit students to elect six units of literature in which any required writing will be determined by the instructor. At the same time, however, a course in advanced composition will be required. To be taught by a team of instructors, this course will emphasize rhetorical writing, critical analysis, and exposition.

Advanced Writing Programs

Many colleges and universities preparing students to teach English in the secondary schools require courses in advanced writing. Catalogue descriptions usually designate such courses as Advanced Composition or Expository Writing, though in some cases the courses are called Communication of Ideas, Intermediate Composition, General Composition, or Expository Analysis. All involve not only the theory and practice of writing but also the close analysis of student papers.

The state-wide pattern of requirements in advanced writing for prospective secondary school teachers of English appears in Table I.

Table 1

**ADVANCED COMPOSITION AS A REQUIREMENT FOR PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS
OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH**

INSTITUTION	Required of Eng. majors who plan to teach high school	Included as 1 of 2 or more courses required in an option	Recom- mended but not required	Not required	Not offered
California Lutheran College		✓			
California State College, Fullerton		✓			
California State College, Hayward	✓				
California State College, Long Beach		✓			
California State College, Los Angeles	✓				
California State Polytechnic, Pomona		✓			
California State Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo	✓				
California Western University	✓				
Chapman College	✓				
Chico State College		✓			
Claremont Graduate School	See note below for other Claremont Colleges			✓	
College of The Holy Names	✓				
College of Notre Dame	✓				
Dominican College of San Rafael	✓				
Fresno State College			✓		
Humboldt State College	✓			✓	

Table 1 (continued)

INSTITUTION	Required of Eng. majors who plan to teach high school	Included as 1 of 2 or more courses required in an option	Recommended but not required	Not required	Not offered
Immaculate Heart College				✓	
La Verne College					✓
Loyola University of Los Angeles			✓		
Mills College				✓	
Occidental College		✓			
Pacific Union College	✓				
Pasadena College				✓	
Pepperdine College	✓				
Sacramento State College				✓	
St. Mary's College					✓
San Diego State College	✓				
San Fernando Valley State College		✓			
San Francisco College for Women	✓				
San Francisco State College	✓				
San Jose State College	✓				
Sonoma State College	✓				
Stanford University	✓				
Stanislaus State College			✓		

Table 1 (continued)

INSTITUTION	Required of Eng. majors who plan to teach high school	Included as 1 of 2 or more courses required in an option	Recommended but not required	Not required	Not offered
University of California, Berkeley	✓				
University of California, Davis	✓				
University of California, Los Angeles	✓				
University of California, Riverside			✓		
University of California, Santa Barbara	✓				
University of Santa Clara					✓
University of the Pacific	✓				
University of Redlands				✓	
University of San Diego, College for Men	✓				
University of San Diego, College for Women	✓				
University of San Francisco	✓				
University of Southern California	✓				
Whittier College			✓		
N = 47	25	7	5	6	4

All teacher training in the Claremont College group is under the Claremont Graduate School, which uses an elaborate screening process for admission to credential programs rather than course requirements. Instruction in composition is given by the undergraduate colleges: Claremont Men's College, Harvey Mudd College, Pitzer College, Pomona College, and Scripps College. Advanced composition is available to undergraduates.

The data in Table I reveal that 53% of the California institutions accredited to offer programs for preparing secondary teachers require that students who expect to teach secondary school English include courses in advanced writing. Seven of the 47 institutions offer advanced writing as one of two or more courses in a required option: (1) writing, in which the student may elect advanced composition or creative writing courses, and (2) language-writing, in which the student may elect from such courses as structure, modern grammar, history of language, and advanced composition. In such options, the choice of advanced composition depends on advisement pressures, student interest, and the variety of courses within the option.

Fifteen institutions either do not offer or do not require advanced composition. In small private colleges the typical explanation is that such course work is unnecessary because the student body is carefully selected and entering freshmen are already competent in writing. It is not always in the small institutions, however, that advanced writing is neglected. In a few large institutions some members of the English faculty oppose offerings in writing beyond the freshman year because (1) the freshman course requires enough writing, or (2) additional courses in writing would reduce the time available for literary studies. Occasionally students are excused from advanced composition on the basis of satisfactory scores on departmental examinations or on published standardized tests, but in at least three colleges advanced composition is required of all prospective teachers in all disciplines.

During the interviews which formed the basis of this report, it became obvious that opinions about composition and the teaching of composition vary considerably. Some faculty members indicated that relatively little is known about the relationship between thinking and writing, that not much is known about how best to teach composition, that research is needed, that teachers should test some of their hypotheses about writing. Others asserted that writing cannot be taught or that it cannot be taught unless the instructor himself knows how to write. A few said that only techniques can be taught, or that writing must be taught through a sequence of carefully developed steps. Some said that reading must be extensive and that writing should develop from literature. Indeed, there was no unanimity of opinion on even the need for advanced composition.

Many instructors expressed doubts about the value of teaching composition through use of a rhetoric or collections of essays by professional writers. They believed that examples of student writing were more effective, since the gap between the work of the professional and the amateur was too great to bridge. Others stated that only through the use of models from "master" or "established" writers could the student learn to write.

In view of the opinions expressed, it was not surprising to find that in scope, content, and methods of instruction, advanced writing programs

varied from institution to institution and from instructor to instructor within the same department. Nevertheless, most of the advanced writing courses appeared to utilize a rhetorical approach, usually classical. A few instructors were more concerned with generative rhetoric or semantics. One used a "psycho-analytical" approach based on short stories. Some, in their efforts to have students discover for themselves the relationship between thought and expression, imposed no theory.

In most courses, blocks of time were set aside for analyzing and evaluating student writing and for conferring with individuals or small groups. In such conferences students usually read, analyzed, and evaluated each other's work, diagnosing writing problems and suggesting ways of overcoming difficulties. In addition, attention was given to style, structure, content, re-writing, and, in some cases, revision of papers. Some instructors spent at least half of the class time on sentence construction, analysis, and expansion of sentences into paragraphs. Writing assignments during the early part of such courses were usually short, and longer papers were assigned toward the end of the term.

Assignments varied from two papers a week to three or four papers a term, and length of papers varied from a few words or paragraphs to 7,000 or more words. Five to seven papers, sometimes including one or more long papers, seemed to be a typical requirement. Longer papers usually involved literary analysis, literary history, research topics, persuasion, and creative writing. Some of the shorter essays were "finger exercises" — sentences expanded through modification; others resulted in papers of description, narration, exposition, analysis, or creative writing.

Regardless of approach or number of papers assigned, class size was a matter of concern to almost every instructor. Enrollment varied from twelve to more than thirty students, although most instructors recommended that each class in writing be limited to 15-25 students.

In the courses examined it was rare to find an instructor who had special academic background in writing or special preparation in the teaching of writing, although many had had experience as teaching assistants. Nearly all instructors of advanced composition were regular members of the English department staff who, for a variety of reasons, had been assigned to teach advanced composition; they had requested the assignment, were interested in writing, were writers themselves, or had taught such courses before. In small departments nearly all instructors had to accept an occasional assignment in advanced writing. It was

Special Methods Courses in English

Information about special methods courses involving the teaching of composition is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

**SPECIAL METHODS COURSES FOR PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH**

INSTITUTION	REQUIRED			Not Required	Not Offered		
	Special Methods in English						
	Eng.	Educ.	Both				
California Lutheran College				✓			
California State College, Fullerton	✓						
California State College, Hayward	✓						
California State College, Long Beach			✓				
California State College, Los Angeles		✓					
California State Polytechnic, Pomona	✓						
California State Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo	✓						
California Western University				✓	✓		
Chapman College				✓			
Chico State College	✓						
Claremont Graduate School	See note below for other Claremont Colleges			✓	✓		
College of The Holy Names				✓			
College of Notre Dame				✓			
Dominican College of San Rafael			✓				
Fresno State College	✓						
Humboldt State College	✓						

Table 2 (continued)

INSTITUTION	REQUIRED			Not Required	Not Offered		
	Special Methods in English						
	Eng.	Educ.	Both				
Immaculate Heart College	✓						
La Verne College				✓			
Loyola University of Los Angeles				✓			
Mills College		✓					
Occidental College				✓	✓		
Pacific Union College	✓						
Pasadena College		✓					
Pepperdine College	✓						
Sacramento State College					✓		
St. Mary's College	✓						
San Diego State College	✓						
San Fernando Valley State College				✓			
San Francisco College for Women	✓						
San Francisco State College	✓						
San Jose State College			✓				
Sonoma State College	✓						
Stanford University			✓				
Stanislaus State College				✓			

Table 2 (continued)

INSTITUTION	REQUIRED			Not Required	Not Offered
	Special Methods in English		General Methods		
	Eng.	Educ.	Both		
University of California, Berkeley	✓				
University of California, Davis	✓				
University of California, Los Angeles			✓		
University of California, Riverside		✓			
University of California, Santa Barbara	✓				
University of Santa Clara				✓	
University of the Pacific	✓				
University of Redlands				✓	
University of San Diego, College for Men				✓	
University of San Diego, College for Women		✓			
University of San Francisco				✓	
University of Southern California		✓			
Whittier College				✓	
N = 47	19	6	6	12	4
					3

Claremont Graduate School offers only an intern program for teacher preparation and schedules no methods courses as such. Interns are supervised by full and part-time staff members from the Graduate School. Many of the latter are in doctoral programs. Staff members have various academic backgrounds, including English.

An examination of the data in Table 2 indicates that of the 47 institutions included in the study, 66% require a special methods course in the teaching of English; twelve offer general but not special methods courses; four neither offer nor require special methods courses; and one offers a special course but does not require it.

Nineteen of the required special methods courses are taught by the department of English, six by Education, and six by both Education and English. In two institutions in the last group, professors hold joint appointments, teach courses in both departments, and are listed as members of both faculties. In the remaining four, informal agreements result in programs in which staff members are drawn from both English and Education. In one graduate school of education an internship program is offered in which interns are supervised by various subject matter specialists, many of whom are currently enrolled in doctoral programs. Three institutions neither offer nor require a methods course of any kind. In one instance the chairman of the English department stated that methods courses are unnecessary.

In the twelve institutions requiring only general methods courses, the nature of the course offering appeared to be determined by the relatively small number of students preparing for secondary school teaching of English. General methods courses, when staffed by departments of Education, are taught by instructors representing a variety of academic backgrounds, including English.

The special methods courses commonly include instruction in the teaching of grammar, usage, literature, composition, structure, and related matters. A few instructors try to unify the teaching of language, literature, and composition. When they work on writing problems, they work also on the teaching of language; when they work on literature, they draw writing assignments from the reading. In many cases no unity in the teaching pattern is discernible.

Information secured during the interviews made it apparent that instruction in methods frequently included an examination of secondary school papers, which were read, diagnosed, and graded. The use of such papers generally proved successful. Instructors recommended it and said that it helped close the gap between the college program and the reality of secondary school teaching. In working with these papers, several instructors devised noteworthy practices. One required that members of his class write on topics which had also been assigned to the secondary school students, compare the two sets of essays, diagnose difficulties, and assess variation in maturity and ability levels. Another had his students plan and teach lessons in composition. Working closely with secondary school teachers, the college students then evaluated the secondary school papers, analyzed problems, and prepared remedial exercises which were actually used in the secondary school classrooms.

The time devoted in the methods courses to the teaching of composition varied from three to eleven or twelve weeks, with some additional

time available during the student teaching seminar, usually held in conjunction with student teaching. The great differences in the amount of time allocated to such courses appear to be related to differences in their effectiveness. Ordinarily, little could be achieved in only a few weeks.

Observation in secondary schools or participation as a teacher aide during the methods course sometimes gave students useful opportunities for working with secondary school writing. A common complaint, however, was that the usual two- to three-unit methods course did not provide sufficient time, that to be successful the special methods course must be closely related to problems faced in actual teaching, and that continuity must be developed in the academic and professional preparation.

Continuity was developed in several ways. Many instructors who taught methods courses also supervised student teachers in English and conducted the student teacher seminars. If the supervisors were from Education, English staff occasionally visited the student teacher. Sometimes when a member of the English faculty staffed the methods course, the instructor also taught courses in advanced composition or modern grammar. Instructors teaching in both academic and professional courses recommended the practice as a means of developing unity and continuity.

At institutions where only Education departments taught the methods courses, or where general rather than special methods courses were offered, most English department chairmen believed that their departments should be more fully involved in teacher preparation. One chairman, cognizant of the need for academic involvement, remarked that "English has too long abdicated its responsibility in preparing teachers of English. We are starting late," he said, "but we must meet the problems of the public schools."

This study of preparation in composition for students planning to teach English in secondary schools indicates that freshman English, advanced composition, and special methods in teaching English are generally regarded as basic preparation. Much of the writing in such courses is said to be expository; other kinds of writing, however, are included. The nature of the writing, the assignments made, and the kind of instruction offered vary from place to place, and often from course to course within an institution. The differences in the courses involving English composition as actually offered produce differences in the preparation of secondary school teachers of English greater than would be supposed from the stated requirements. The conclusion is clear that these courses — freshman English, advanced composition, and special methods in teaching English — when adequately given, provide a sufficient preparation for secondary school teachers of English composition. It is also clear that advanced composition may not be available and that special methods courses in teaching English may be inadequate for many prospective teachers.

V. The Ideal Preparation in Composition: A Survey of Opinion

FOR this portion of the report, responses were sought to the question, "Ideally, what should be the background preparation in composition for those preparing to teach secondary school English?" Three general classifications emerged: (1) Responses made most frequently, by 65% or more of those interviewed; (2) Responses made with some frequency, by 40-60% of those interviewed; and (3) Responses made least frequently, by 10% or fewer of persons interviewed.

Responses in the first category appeared so often that they were judged to constitute a body of general agreement. Responses in the second classification indicated some disparity of opinion, and responses in the third classification were simply miscellaneous statements, without a definite pattern but of some interest. A comparison of responses makes possible some judgment about the actual and the ideal status of preparation offered by colleges for prospective English teachers.

Responses from 65% or more of persons interviewed

In the survey of faculty opinion about teacher preparation in English, the following responses appeared most frequently:

1. Preparation in composition should include additional work in the following:
 - A. Advanced writing, including advanced expository and creative writing.
 - B. Language, including grammar, structure, linguistics, and history of the language.
2. Instruction in composition should be part of a major in which students have a solid background in literature, literary tradition, and critical analysis of literature.
3. English departments should accept responsibility for preparation of teachers of English by:
 - A. Adding staff who are competent and experienced in both college and secondary school programs.
 - B. Offering and staffing courses in special methods of teaching English.
 - C. Assisting with supervision of student teachers.
 - D. Offering seminars, writing laboratories, and courses in the teaching of composition.

Responses made by 40-60% of those interviewed

The following responses were made by 40-60% of the persons asked what the background preparation in composition ought to be for those planning to teach secondary school English:

1. Instruction should develop in the prospective teacher a respect for and knowledge of his subject by:
 - A. Teaching him to take writing seriously, to realize that it is deeply personal.
 - B. Teaching him enough about writing to convey knowledge and enthusiasm to the pupils he will teach.
 - C. Making him aware of and interested in research.
2. Departments of English and Education should make special methods courses more extensive and intensive. They should relate the instruction more closely to actual teaching by:
 - A. Requiring observation and participation programs prior to student teaching.
 - B. Working with high school pupils and with their compositions, diagnosing writing difficulties.
 - C. Grading essays written in high school.
 - D. Utilizing the knowledge and skills of competent secondary school teachers of composition.
3. Instructors in college composition should have significant background and experience in writing and the teaching of writing.
4. English departments should re-adjust their curriculum by:
 - A. Providing for prospective teachers advanced composition courses which deal to some extent with writing problems encountered in secondary schools.
 - B. Developing continuity in freshman English and advanced composition.
5. Within the pattern of the English major a realistic approach in writing courses, methods, and student teaching should be made to reduce the gap between academic theory and the daily problems faced in the secondary school classroom.

The responses made by 40% or more of the persons interviewed to the question about ideal preparation for the secondary teacher resulted in a consistent body of comment and wide agreement. The faculty members interviewed generally believed that improvement in the preparation of teachers of composition as well as in the teaching of composition in the secondary schools was needed, and that the means for improvement were available or could be made available through courses in advanced writing and language studies. Close and early contacts with high school composition programs and greater involvement of English departments in the preparation of teachers of English composition were widely supported. If the ideal preparation was not provided, or not actually received by prospective teachers, the reason was not because it was unattainable. The means were at hand, but were too frequently neglected.

Responses made by 10% or fewer of persons interviewed

The following opinions were expressed by 10% or fewer of the persons interviewed. They are random responses which illustrate the

variety of opinions which were expressed, and should not be regarded in any other way.

1. Change the credential structure; it blocks any imaginative approach to teacher preparation.
2. The entire college should be concerned with excellence in composition.
3. Establish higher standards and more exact screening procedures for students seeking admission to credential programs.
4. Teachers should like and understand pupils, should be sensitive to the impact of silent language, and should know that they must compete for the adolescent's attention.
5. Require courses in prescriptive grammar; we do not know enough about these modern grammars.
6. Writing cannot be taught, but the teacher needs to learn techniques which he can pick up by grading college writing.
7. Additional work in writing is not needed; students should learn to write before they come to college.
8. Improve spelling and handwriting.
9. High schools deserve the teachers they get; the working conditions are bad.
10. One-third of the units in the English major should consist of instruction in writing.
11. Develop a major in composition.
12. As early as possible, students should commit themselves to an English major.
13. Prospective teachers must learn to present knowledge in planned segments and concepts. They should not attempt to teach everything they know, but they should know more than they teach.
14. The student who transfers with his degree already completed and seeks only the credential is a problem. How can we determine his competence?
15. Students should meet the institution's requirements for the teaching credential. They should not apply to the state because state requirements are minimal.
16. The student should register for courses in poetry, speech, history, oral interpretation, philosophy.
17. Prospective teachers should learn more about intuitive and imaginative thinking.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The foregoing investigation of the preparation of students for the training of secondary school composition indicates a general agreement that training in this area can and should be improved. Basic to the study of all advanced writing is freshman composition, taught in a variety of ways, involving a variety of subject matter, and frequently conducted by graduate student assistants who do not always receive adequate training and supervision. When student assistants are well supervised, the results are more likely to be satisfactory, and the assistants themselves gain valuable experience. Poor supervision and poor results tend to go together. When freshman English sections are conducted by full-time faculty members, supervision is negligible, and the results are varied and are seldom evaluated.

Within the English major itself the traditional view still emphasizes courses in literature, demanding 85-95% of the student's time. Such courses are important, for a solid foundation in literature and literary criticism is valuable background for every would-be writer and every teacher of writing. Equally important, however, are courses in advanced composition and language. In writing courses, particularly, college instructors seldom have any special preparation for the teaching which they must do, and the result is experimentation in which almost as many kinds of writing programs emerge as there are instructors involved. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising to find a gap between college instruction in writing and actual practice in the high school.

Special methods courses in teaching English often help in closing this gap by providing opportunities for realistic work in dealing with secondary school writing problems. This is in part due to the fact that most of the instructors of such courses have professional training in teaching, have been secondary or junior college teachers or supervisors, and usually have good academic backgrounds. Unfortunately, many of these methods courses give too little time to the problems of teaching English composition, or receive little attention.

In institutions in which English departments are involved in teacher preparation and have employed specialists to teach methods courses as well as academic courses, the program meets with some success. In those institutions in which English departments are not involved in the teacher preparation program, or in cases where general methods may be substituted for special methods, dissension frequently exists, with the result that a burden is created both for the institution and for the education of prospective teachers.

In general, the best programs attempt to maintain continuity between college instruction and high school teaching, between academic and professional preparation. Whenever department chairmen and higher

administrative officials favor the work in composition and teacher preparation, efforts in this direction are likely to be successful.

This study of composition courses indicates that English and Education departments are concerned about student writing and about their roles in the preparation of secondary school teachers of English. Some English departments, but too few, are beginning to recognize that they have a definite responsibility in the preparation of competent teachers who not only write well themselves, but know how to develop the same ability in their students. Instructors experiment constantly, and the variety of opinions about what should be done is almost unlimited. Endless unplanned experimentation, without clear-cut purposes, however, will not resolve existing uncertainties.

The secondary school teacher is assigned a heavy load in a crowded classroom, under a mandate to educate everyone, and encounters problems which have no ready solutions. It is clear that most students in secondary schools do not become competent writers. Yet more would write better if their teachers could write well themselves, and knew how to teach writing. With a strong background in literary courses and comparatively little effective college instruction in language and composition, English teachers usually prefer to teach literature. Many of them are not fully committed to the teaching of composition and dislike the demands involved when working intimately with student writing and its attendant problems. If the colleges placed a greater emphasis on the teaching of writing, the results would be felt at the secondary school level.

Recommendations

On the basis of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Colleges and universities should recognize the continued unmet need for secondary school teachers of English who are competent in subject matter and have a deep commitment to the teaching of composition. Some have good programs; others pay little attention to this responsibility. The preparation of English teachers should involve a program in which courses in advanced composition, language, and special methods, designed for students preparing to teach, are carefully correlated and closely related to the realities of instruction in the secondary schools.
2. College English departments, already accepting responsibility for the preparation of teachers, should increase their involvement. They should re-examine and perhaps re-adjust the English curriculum to place more emphasis on competence in composition and language. In this readjustment they should assign to composition classes experienced instructors who write well, know how to teach writing in a variety of subjects, and are thoroughly familiar with problems encountered in the secondary schools.

3. Courses in advanced writing and special methods should be concerned not only with improvement in the college student's writing but with the evaluation and grading of essays at the secondary as well as at the college level. The prospective teacher should learn principles of writing. He should know how secondary students write, why they write as they do, and what measures are likely to produce improvement.
4. Departments of English and of Education should realize that in the preparation of teachers they share a common problem, which is far too important for them to become involved in dissension and petty jealousies. Merely knowing that a good teacher must be competent in both subject matter and in teaching procedures is not enough. They should cooperate more effectively in developing a better understanding of methods of instruction in advanced composition and in improving the training of prospective teachers of English.

Appendix A

Institutions Visited and Persons Interviewed

1. CALIFORNIA LUTHERAN COLLEGE, THOUSAND OAKS
Nancy Belk, *Department of English*
2. CALIFORNIA STATE COLLEGE, FULLERTON
James Cusick, *Coordinator of Secondary Education*
O. C. Ramsay, *Chairman, Department of English*
Elmer Schneider, *Department of English*
3. CALIFORNIA STATE COLLEGE, HAYWARD
Richard Mathews, *Assistant to Chairman, Department of English*
4. CALIFORNIA STATE COLLEGE, LONG BEACH
Charles Buckland, *Chairman, Department of English*
Henry R. Sehmann, *Chairman, Division of Education*
5. CALIFORNIA STATE COLLEGE, LOS ANGELES
Robert Forbes, *Chairman, Secondary Education*
John Palmer, *Acting Chairman, Department of English*
6. CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE, POMONA
Rodman Garrity, *Coordinator of Teacher Credential Program*
C. Edwin Harwood, *Chairman, Language Arts Department*
7. CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE, SAN LUIS OBISPO
W. W. Armentrout, *Coordinator, Secondary Education*
Shirley Hickman, *Department of English*
Starr Jenkins, *Coordinator, Freshman English*
Willard Pedersen, *Chairman, Department of English and Speech*
Walter Shroeder, *Chairman, Department of Education*
8. CALIFORNIA WESTERN UNIVERSITY, SAN DIEGO
Stanford Carlson, *Department of Communications*
William De Saeger, *Chairman, Department of English*
Walter Rehwolt, *Dean, School of Education*
9. CHAPMAN COLLEGE, ORANGE
Melvin R. Watson, *Chairman, Department of English*
10. CHICO STATE COLLEGE
C. S. Felver, *Chairman, Department of English*
Lowell Stratton, *Department of English*
Donald Veith, *Department of English*
11. CLAREMONT GRADUATE SCHOOL
Malcolm Douglas, *Chairman, School of Education*
12. COLLEGE OF THE HOLY NAMES, OAKLAND
Sister Madeleine Maria, *Acting Chairman, Department of English*
13. COLLEGE OF NOTRE DAME, BELMONT
Earl Akin, *Department of English*

14. DOMINICAN COLLEGE OF SAN RAFAEL
Sister Marie, *Department of English*
Sister M. Nicholas, *Chairman, Department of English*
Margaret Wolfson, *Director of Student Teaching, Department of Education*
15. FRESNO STATE COLLEGE
Robert S. Billings, *Chairman, Department of English*
Frederick H. Brengelman, *Department of English*
Russell E. Leavenworth, *Department of English*
Robert O'Neal, *Department of English*
16. HUMBOLDT STATE COLLEGE, ARCATA
Whitney Buck, *Department of English*
Charles Rugless, *Department of English*
Giles Sinclair, *Department of English*
D. F. Strahan, *Chairman, Department of Education and Psychology*
17. IMMACULATE HEART COLLEGE, LOS ANGELES
Sister Marian, *Chairman, Department of English*
Frederick F. Quinlan, *Dean, School of Education*
18. LA VERNE COLLEGE
Catherine Firman, *Department of English*
19. LOYOLA UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES
Daniel Mitchell, *Department of English and Communication Arts*
Paul Schumann, *Director of Student Teaching, Department of Education*
20. MILLS COLLEGE, OAKLAND
Elizabeth Marie Pope, *Chairman, Department of English*
Caroline Zito, *Department of Education*
21. OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE, LOS ANGELES
Louis James Owen, *Chairman, Department of English and Comparative Literature*
Jo Stanchfield, *Acting Chairman, Department of Education*
22. PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE, ANGWIN
Alice B. Babcock, *Department of English*
23. PASADENA COLLEGE
(Information available only through the catalogue)
24. PEPPERDINE COLLEGE, LOS ANGELES
Wyatt Jones, *Director of Secondary Education, Department of Education*
James Smyth, *Chairman, Department of English*
Olaf Tegner, *Chairman, Department of Education*
25. SACRAMENTO STATE COLLEGE
Marc Bertonasco, *Department of English*
George Gardner, *Department of Education*
Floyd L. McAlister, *Department of English*
William C. O'Dell, *Head, Department of Secondary Education*

26. ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, MORAGA
James E. Townsend, *Chairman, Department of English*
27. SAN DIEGO STATE COLLEGE
Ernest Marchand, *Department of English*
Gerald A. Person, *Acting Dean, School of Education*
28. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY STATE COLLEGE, NORTHRIDGE
Daniel Bernd, *Director of Freshman English*
Anthony La Bue, *Dean, School of Education*
Arthur Marion, *Associate Dean, School of Education*
Henry van Slooten, *Chairman, Department of English*
29. SAN FRANCISCO COLLEGE FOR WOMEN
Evelyn Klinckmann, *Coordinator of Student Teaching, Department of Education*
Patrick Sweeney, *Department of English and Humanities*
30. SAN FRANCISCO STATE COLLEGE
Maurice Bassan, *Department of English*
Robert Hall, *Department of English*
Dorothy Petitt, *Department of English*
31. SAN JOSE STATE COLLEGE
David Van Becker, *Supervisor of Student Teachers, Department of English*
Graham Wilson, *Chairman, Department of English*
32. SONOMA STATE COLLEGE, ROHNERT PARK
Nirmal Dhesi, *Department of English*
Hector H. Lee, *Dean of Instruction*
Dorothy Overly, *Chairman, Department of English*
33. STANFORD UNIVERSITY
S. Dale Harris, *Department of English*
Thomas Moser, *Chairman, Department of English*
34. STANISLAUS STATE COLLEGE, TURLOCK
John Gill, *Director, Freshman English*
James Jensen, *Chairman, Department of English*
Richard Jones, *Department of Education*
35. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
Thomas Parkinson, *Department of English*
36. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS
Wayne Harsh, *Department of English*
37. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
Bradford Allen Booth, *Chairman, Department of English*
James T. Fleming, *School of Education*
Ronald Freeman, *Director of Freshman English*
John D. McNeil, *Head of Supervised Teaching and Internship*
38. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE
George Knox, *Chairman, Department of English*
39. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA
Edward W. Loomis, *Chairman, Department of English*
John A. Nelson, Jr., *Head of Teacher Education*

40. UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC, STOCKTON
Charles Clerc, *Department of English*
Floyd King, *Dean, Department of Curriculum and Instruction,
School of Education*
C. C. Olson, *Chairman, Department of English*
Eugene C. Ross, *Department of English*
41. UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS
Frederick S. Bromberger, *Chairman, Department of English*
George W. Burchill, *Director, School of Education*
42. UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO, COLLEGE FOR MEN
Lee Gerlach, *Chairman, Department of English*
John F. McGeever, *Chairman, Department of Education*
43. UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO, SAN DIEGO COLLEGE
FOR WOMEN
Mother Sally Furay, *Chairman, Department of English*
Mother Margaret Guest, *Chairman, Department of Community
Service Education*
44. UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO
David M. Kirk, *Chairman, Department of English*
45. UNIVERSITY OF SANTA CLARA
John H. Grey, S.J., *Chairman, Department of English*
46. UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
Wendell Cannon, *School of Education*
David Malone, *Chairman, Departments of English and Comparative
Literature*
Irving Melbo, *Dean, School of Education*
John Nichol, *Chairman, Freshman English*
47. WHITTIER COLLEGE
Gilbert McEwen, *Chairman, Department of English*
Homer Hurst, *Chairman, Department of Education*

Appendix B

Survey of Freshman English Programs

1. California Lutheran College, Thousand Oaks
2. California State College, Fullerton
3. California State College, Long Beach
4. California State College, Los Angeles
5. California State Polytechnic College, Pomona
6. California State Polytechnic College, San Luis Obispo
7. California Western University, San Diego
8. Dominican College of San Rafael
9. Humboldt State College, Arcata
10. Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles
11. Loyola University of Los Angeles
12. Mills College, Oakland
13. Occidental College, Los Angeles
14. Pacific Union College, Angwin
15. Pepperdine College, Los Angeles
16. St. Mary's College, Moraga
17. San Diego State College
18. San Fernando Valley State College, Northridge
19. San Francisco State College, San Francisco
20. Sonoma State College, Rohnert Park
21. Stanford University
22. Stanislaus State College, Turlock
23. University of California, Berkeley
24. University of California, Davis
25. University of California, Riverside
26. University of California, Santa Barbara
27. University of Redlands
28. University of San Diego, College for Men
29. University of San Diego, San Diego College for Women
30. University of San Francisco
31. University of Santa Clara
32. University of Southern California, Los Angeles
33. Whittier College